

# Globalization and the Rise of One Heterogeneous World Culture

## A Microperspective of a Global Village

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### Abstract

What are the effects of economic and cultural globalization on local communities? This research proposes that economic globalization does not lead to homogeneity of culture, but to heterogeneity. I analyse quantitative and qualitative data for Leixlip, the strongest globalized village in the Republic of Ireland, one of the world's most globalized economies. Dominant economic globalization causes a resurgence of local identity, a reinvention of local history and a revival of the indigenous language. An expansive global identity both provokes *and* facilitates an explanatory local identity. The results confirm that globalization of culture creates heterogeneity, but within the context of one world culture, namely as local adaptations of world cultural forms.

**Key words:** culture • globalization • world society

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

How can we imagine the making of a heterogeneous, yet singular world culture? Macro-phenomenological research, building on contemporary sociological institutionalism (Thomas et al., 1987; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991), has drawn attention to the organization of culture on a worldwide basis (Boli and Thomas, 1997; Meyer et al., 1997; Katzenstein et al., 1998; Ó Riain, 2000; Beckfield, 2003). An understanding of nations as construction of a common wider culture has showed how world society shapes state policies in domains as diverse as education (Meyer et al., 1992; Bradley and Ramirez, 1996), science (Finnemore, 1993) and welfare provision (Strang and Chang, 1993). In world polity, the significance of interactions between non-state and state action is increasingly understood (Katzenstein et al., 1998), with state, market and society embedded within the other (Ó Riain, 2000). Does the institutionalized world polity shape one world culture?

While there is agreement that culture has become increasingly global (Hannerz, 1987; Lechner, 1989; Featherstone, 1990; Robertson 1992), few scholars defend the thesis of a global culture (McLuhan, 1964; Schiller, 1976; Levitt, 1983; Sklair, 1991). Most sociologists (Guillén, 2001) reject the idea that a homogenizing global culture is in the making (Mazlish, 1993; Friedman, 1994; Appadurai, 1996; Geertz, 1998; Held et al., 1999; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). It is clear that a globalization of culture does not necessarily lead to global cultural homogeneity. Micro-phenomenological and conventional cultural models stress the tradition-based resistance of local life to the exogenous pressures of modernization (Meyer et al., 1997). Others point towards diversification in the form of hybridization (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995) or glocalization (Robertson, 1992) of world culture. However, they miss the extent to which, in the contemporary world, the local is itself cosmopolitan (Hannerz, 1987).

The thesis of a heterogeneous yet singular world culture poses at least two conceptual problems. First, the notion that a culture as the expression of a collective mode of life can be singular or *sui generis* presupposes different modes and repertoires in a universe of modes and repertoires (Smith, 1990). The rising importance of humanity as a collective actor in the ontological core of world culture (Albrow and King, 1990; Robertson, 1992; Holton, 1998; Boli, 1999, 2005) suggests the emergence of a collective mode of life and a singular world culture. Yet the second problem is whether or not cultural homogeneity is a conceptual prerequisite for a collective mode of life. As Hannerz (1987: 548) wrote about his fieldwork in Nigeria: 'Where there is no cultural homogeneity, no shared indigenous language, it may appear that there is no such thing as a Nigerian culture to study. Yet Nigeria is a reality, of a certain kind.'

Similarly, I argue that without global cultural homogeneity, without one shared global language, world culture is a reality, of a certain kind. How can we imagine this reality? Emphasis on the possible *outcomes* of the processes of globalization of culture in a non-specified future has overshadowed the concern with their *actual realization*. The present is a crucial time in the history of globalization. Sociology needs to empirically document and identify the mechanisms behind globalization's cultural transformations because it is what we can know and measure now. World polity theory draws attention to the operating of world cultural forms and the interactions between state and non-state actors on a global and macro-level. The reality of world cultural forms and local adaptations can be studied from a micro-perspective as well.

I aim to describe the emerging reality of world culture on the micro-level as a creation of intertwining processes of economic and cultural globalization by enterprise, state and local society. In order to address this objective, I selected a local society subject to strong processes of economic globalization, in a nation-state that is well known as being strongly globalized. Globalization is an ambiguous concept (Van der Bly, 2005). I conceptualize globalization

following Held et al. (1999: 16) as ‘a process, which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions [...] generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity.’ I identified the changes in the local cultural field, especially in the field of language and identity, including history. To contribute to an understanding of the global village, I chose to study one little global village. Small is beautiful, after all (Hannersz, 1986).

## 2. SAMPLING AND METHODS

It is a well-known fact that the Republic of Ireland is a strongly globalized economy (Ó Riain, 1999). The A.T. Kearny/Foreign Policy Magazine Globalization Index ranked the Republic of Ireland first during the time when the research was carried out (Kearny, 2002, 2003, 2004).<sup>1</sup> I selected the Republic of Ireland as the national context. Within Ireland I selected the town with the highest per capita proportion of foreign direct investment. The selected community was Leixlip in Co. Kildare. Leixlip is a town of just over 15,000 inhabitants, located in County Kildare but in the vicinity of Dublin. Both Intel Corporation and Hewlett-Packard have built large manufacturing facilities on the lands of Leixlip, with Intel’s plant being the company’s largest manufacturing plant outside of the USA.

Developments in the cultural field are examined through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the first stage I focused more on the collective level, including an analysis of quantitative census data, document analysis and visual photography. The second stage focused on the individual level, in-depth interviews and short interviews. The research was part of a larger study on globalization and local communities and has been carried out over a period of two years, between 2003 and 2005.

Documentary realities constructed by Intel and Hewlett-Packard and of local (civil) organizations were analysed. Collective self-presentations included for example brochures by the Town Council (‘Leixlip: Proud of Its Past. Rejoices in its Present. Confident of its Future’), a report relevant for the Residents Association (An Bord Pleanála, 2005), but also less official documents such as brochures of the Leixlip Festival, menus of restaurants, or leaflets handed out during the monthly Irish mass.

I analysed electronic documents such as a promotional CD-Rom of the town, the town’s website including the distinctive linguistic registers used and the website of the Leixlip Theatre and Drama Group, including an analysis of the national identity of the writers of the plays staged since their foundation in 1974. I analysed recently published historical studies on Leixlip and was mostly interested in the contextualization of the studies. I collected and analysed visual data, over 300 photographs, data such as signposts, billboards, postcards, illustrated maps, logos, advertisements and notice-boards. The main purpose of this part of the research

was to investigate the self-presentation of local identity, expressed by the different social groups within Leixlip society.

Besides data on the collective level, I conducted 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews of one hour. I selected key informants and representatives of Intel, Hewlett-Packard and the Industrial Development Authority and of local civil organizations (Town Council, residents committee, school, church, historical society, committee for the design of the town crest, Gaelic Athletic Association, drama club, etc.). I conducted roughly 20 short interviews with Leixlip inhabitants in the pub, supermarket, post office, church. The nature of these interviews was generally more guided conversations and they were not taped. Since the research was fragmented and conducted over a long period of time, my position as a researcher was relatively detached.

This article presents the results of the inquiry into a descriptive question and examines how the making of cultural heterogeneity operates on the local level as a consequence of processes of economic globalization. Elsewhere I further discuss the causal question and explore the mechanisms and loci of change in Leixlip (Van Der Bly, 2006).

### 3. A GLOBAL VILLAGE: LEIXLIP, CO. KILDARE, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Globalization as a process of spatial transformation is nowhere in the world identical. Both the choice for Ireland and for Leixlip include the choice for an economic globalization that is distinctive in two ways. First, Ireland's *economic* globalization is very recent and of an explosive character (Ó Riain, 1997). In 1987 Ireland had the highest debt in Europe, 130 percent of its GNP (McGowan, 2000). Yet Irish GDP stands now at 115 percent of EU average GDP, compared with 58 percent when Ireland joined the Common Market in 1973 (McAleese, 2000). Economists explain Ireland's remarkable economic development, which has prompted them to dub the country the 'Celtic Tiger', generally as the result of a combination of factors, most notably European Transfers, a favourable preferential tax rate of 10 percent and demographic factors such as a young and well-educated population (Mac Sharry and White, 2000; McAleese, 2000; McGowan, 2000; Barry, 2000; Barry et al., 2001; Burnham, 2003). Transformation towards indige-nous high technology has been stimulated by a flexible developmental state that promotes development by connecting local and global networks of innovation (Ó Riain, 1999, 2000). Others have argued that the growth of the Irish economy has not been a matter of ideal macro-economic conditions, but depends largely on American investments (O'Hearn, 1998).

Second, Ireland's *cultural* globalization is somehow distinctive in the sense that Ireland was up until very recently a rather homogenous, Irish and Catholic country, with mostly an emigrating population with little or no immigration (Corcoran and Peillon, 2002; Inglis, 2005). Ireland had no other minorities apart from the Traveller community and a Protestant Anglo-Saxon minority. The

development of a strong national Irish identity was necessary after winning independence from Britain (O'Mahoney and Delanty, 2001). In 2002, 93 percent of the population held Irish nationality, three percent British, and five percent was from elsewhere (CSO, 2002). This pattern though is rapidly changing. Globalization's appearance within Leixlip's local context shares the national characteristics, yet distinguishes itself in one main way, as I will argue.

Leixlip in County Kildare is a small picturesque town just across the border of County Dublin at the confluence of the Rivers Rye and Liffey. It used to be famous for its salmon leap that attracted many visitors in the 19th century. In the first decades of the 20th century Leixlip led a sleepy and unremarkable existence: a little village of a thousand inhabitants, a pub, a grocery and a church. Suddenly, during the 1970s, Leixlip's population increased significantly,<sup>2</sup> a result of suburbanization and intra-national migration. In the early 1970s local groups put forward the idea that a Town Commission for Leixlip would be the most effective way to give local people control over the preservation and development of their town. A survey was carried out. 'Armed with this result a group of local people began what was to be a long struggle to gain a measure of "Home Rule" for the town', writes a local historian (Nelson, 1990: 66). Finally, in 1987 Leixlip was granted Town Commission Status. This is the lowest form of local authority in Ireland and merely serves as a representation of local residents.

While the residents of Leixlip were lobbying for 'Home Rule', the Irish Industrial Development Authority (IDA) lobbied in the USA to convince the Intel Corporation to expand to Ireland (Ó Riain, 1997). Intel decided to locate its manufacturing facilities in Ireland in October 1989 and commenced production on the 150 hectares of a former farm at Leixlip in 1990. The site in Leixlip is Intel's fourth largest manufacturing site overall and the largest outside the United States. It produces microprocessors and communication silicon chips. Employment onsite is 5150 with both direct employees and indirect long-term contractors. Intel has invested around five billion euros in the site.<sup>3</sup>

Intel's decision to move to Ireland in 1989 played a crucial role, 'as the flagship for the IDA to attract other companies' (Ó Riain, 1997). This decision has helped to produce a cascade of followers (Krugman, 1997), amongst which was Hewlett-Packard, locating an inkjet cartridges factory in Leixlip in 1995. Currently this factory has 2400 employees on the site. The employees are young, with an average age of 27 and relatively high educated: 70 percent of the employees are college graduates.<sup>4</sup>

Intel's decision to move to Ireland was a result of global, European, national and regional developments. The IDA identified a suitable site for Intel, located on the lands of Leixlip. Yet while having campaigned long for Home Rule, the town itself had very little involvement in the decision that would influence the town most profoundly.

I read the news in the national papers. (Leixlip resident J. Member Town Commission 1989)

States have been instrumental in shaping the current globalization project, often in conjunction with their own national bourgeois classes (McMichael, 1996; Sassen, 1999), and this seems to be the case for Ireland. Yet on a local level, I identify economic globalization in Leixlip as a form of what I have called *dominant* globalization, with little local autonomy. I contrast *dominant* globalization with what I have called *autonomous* globalization. I have discussed this innovative theoretical and conceptual contrast extensively elsewhere (Van der Bly, 2006).

On the macro-level, world polity perspective examines dynamics within world society, especially global cultural processes that promote inconsistency and conflict in the production and modification of world societal structure and characteristics (Meyer et al., 1997). Which dynamics do we find on the micro-level? The Town Council compares in the brochure 'Leixlip. Léim An Bhradáin. Proud of its Past. Rejoices in its Present. Confident of its Future', contemporary globalization with the Viking invasion:

The most significant event, since the Vikings came up the Liffey, was the decision of Intel Corporation, the world's largest manufacturer of semiconductor integrated circuits, to locate their first European manufacturing facility in Leixlip.

A recent town study, carried out by an independent consultancy firm, concludes that:

The problems facing Leixlip town centre are somewhat unusual. While the town does not suffer from significant unemployment or other economic problems, there is a perception that the town has not benefited from the growth in recent residential and employment development as much as expected. Major new employment centres (HP and Intel) are far removed. There is a perception that the rapid pace of new development has to some extent overwhelmed the town. (Brady, Shipman, Martin, 2002: 1)

Intel has been located on the grounds of the former stud farm in Leixlip for over 15 years and shows no signs of leaving. Hewlett-Packard has just announced enlargement of the site. If there are no major economic problems, then which developments do we see in the cultural field?

#### **4. TWO SIDES OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: AN EXPANSIVE AND AN EXPLANATORY IDENTITY**

A special train service, called the Arrow, connects the inner city of Dublin with its outer suburbs. It is 8 October 2002, the first day of my fieldwork. I get off at Leixlip's Louisa Bridge station. It seems in the middle of nowhere. In the far distance there are some new housing estates but apart from that: nothing. Not even a pub. That is very unusual. Every central meeting point in Ireland seems to have a pub nearby. Not here, in Leixlip Louisa Bridge. Where is the centre of this town? In this land that belongs to no one, the town does not seem to exist. Wait. There is one sign. Blue letters on a yellow background: *Hewlett-Packard, 2.5 km*. The visitor, who does not arrive by public transport but by car, will see a

very different signboard. There it is, just after the wide stretch of Intel's buildings and car parks: *Welcome to Leixlip*. It is huge and a complex constellation of references to local, national and international belongings, seemingly designed to express the local identity to the visitor. Or possibly not just to the motorist, who will drive too fast to be able to carefully read the signpost, but to Leixlip's own inhabitants as well.

The Hewlett-Packard signpost just indicates the name of the global market player and the distance in kilometres. It is an effective, unambiguous sign, aiming to 'instruct the viewer to get where we are, assuming that you know who we are', reflecting, as Boli (2005: 385) says, 'world cultural elements woven into the taken for granted fabric of everyday life, thereby becoming invisible'. On the other hand, the very visible Leixlip sign defines Leixlip, sketching the framework of an identity that is seemingly not self-evident. Its main purpose seems to be to 'explain the visitor who we are and what we stand for, assuming that you do *not* know who we are'. This signboard reflects a dynamic, contested identity that is in the process of construction and at pains to explain itself.

Some contend that in the context of what is argued to be the deepening global-local disorder (Peck and Tickell, 1994), most local governments have been constrained to adjust to heightened levels of economic uncertainty by engaging in short-term forms of interspatial competition, such as place marketing (Leitner and Sheppard, 1998). Cities now market themselves in the global economy publicizing the virtues of their respective business climate (Mayer, 1998). Yet if there is any winner in an interspatial competition over economic activity, it must be Leixlip: the town with the highest per capita FDI in the most globalized economy in the world. Then why would Leixlip need 'place marketing'? What is marketed to whom?

Leixlip's Town Council positioned the *Welcome to Leixlip* signpost in the early 1990s, shortly after Intel's arrival. Dominant globalization in Leixlip is further characterized by what Boli (2005) has identified as four contemporary world cultural trends: extra-ordinary expansion, organization, ubiquity and rationalizing, seemingly homogenizing the local life experience. While Hewlett-Packard and Intel erected efficient, rationalized, predictable signs pointing to their lands, local society erected a complex, multi-layered signboard, marking where the town starts and the global grounds ends.

In this section I examine the layers of local identity. I suggest distinguishing an *expansive identity* of the global culture versus a, what I call, *explanatory identity* of the local culture. The signboard instructs the viewer how to perceive Leixlip, while reminding the Leixlip inhabitants who they are, on four levels: a) which language they speak; b) to which nation-state they belong; c) what their shared history is; and d) with whom they share their present. What is the identity that needs to be explained, and that is not a known fact?



### The Irish Language: *Fáilte go Léim an Bhradáin*

First of all, the visitor is told that this is a bilingual, Irish-speaking town. The signpost welcomes the visitor to Leixlip in English and in Irish: *Fáilte go Léim an Bhradáin*. As I will discuss later, the appearance of an Irish welcome on the signboard is more remarkable than it might initially seem: Leixlip is traditionally not Irish-speaking, and Irish is rarely spoken today. The practical use of a welcome in Irish on this board for Irish people is therefore limited. As Negra (2001) has showed, the Irish Tourist Board, Bord Fáilte, has increasingly marketed the pleasure of a vacation in Ireland as a retreat into the past and a welcome in the Irish language suits that image. However, Leixlip is not a tourist town at all. If there are no urgent economic, historical, political or tourist reasons to design the signboard bilingually, then why is the visitor welcomed in Irish?

The *symbolic* meaning of this sign, I argue, is significant in at least two ways. The Irish language is exclusively associated with Ireland. This linguistic distinction flags therefore nationalism, albeit of a banal variety (Billig, 1995). Second, through identifying the Irish language as part of their identity, civil society in Leixlip or at least their representatives in the Town Commission, establish an act of global connection and of local disintegration. Global connections are created with other people outside of the town or the nation who speak Irish. Most likely the Irish diaspora, but also with a Sudanese anthropologist who is fluent in Irish or a man from the north of the Netherlands who taught himself fluent Irish and now translates the books of Pádraig Pearse into Dutch.

Yet global connections can cause indirectly local disintegration: a division between those who do and who do not speak Irish. Alternatively, Leixlip could have been defined as an Irish town based on geography. Geopolitical borders by definition create local cohesion (Smith, 1986). In that case 'Leixlip' would have for example explicitly included an African surgeon who lives in the town. The local explanatory identity, reaching out to global connections, is therefore cosmopolitan in itself (Hannerz, 1987), but refers at the same time to local disintegration.

### The Creation of National Myths on the Local Level

The explanatory identity manifests itself on a second level. The signboard advertises Leixlip as '*The Original Home of Guinness*', legitimately placing the town in the centre of the imaginary identity-boundaries of the Irish nation-state and flagging nationalism through symbols. 'Forgetting is part of the operation of banal nationalism. The nation is flagged, but the flagging itself is forgotten as the nation is mindlessly remembered' (Billig, 1995: 143). Billig's instructive examples of banal nationalism are mostly derived from the British context. Yet in Leixlip nationalism is not mindlessly remembered.

A mechanism that seems to have the form of 'defensive banal nationalism' first emerged in an interview with one of the local historians. Why is Leixlip advertised as 'The original home of Guinness'?



Well, as far as I am aware, historically ... Yes ... the first Guinness-operation was in Leixlip and I think that it is *historically safe* ... Arthur Guinness set up the first Guinness brewery here in Leixlip ... That is broadly accepted and historians are reasonably happy as to where the actual site was, just off the Main Street Bridge. (Local historian M., emphasis added)

The answer is not a straightforward explanation. The respondent uses the expression 'historically safe' to justify the explanation, as if to vindicate a stronghold that somehow seems to belong to the domain of the disputable rather than to the obvious. Leixlip might have another interest to canvass itself as the home of Guinness, turning the historical fact into a crucial instrument in a defensive strategy. But what needs to be defended? And who are the attackers? It seems to be a recent phenomenon.

Up until relatively recent times I don't think it was a very big factor or selling point for Leixlip ... but in more recent times, particularly since the Town Commission became aware of it. The fact of Guinness has been widely promoted, certainly compared to when I came to Leixlip in the 1970s ... I was aware of it, but it was not constantly mentioned or promoted, where as the present everybody seems interested in promoting it ... (Local historian M.)

Shortly after Hewlett-Packard and Intel's arrival in Leixlip, signboards were posted advertising Leixlip as the 'Home of Guinness'. With the arrival of the global, a national myth is locally created. National Irish identity was invented and codified by a nationalist intelligentsia in the late 19th century at the eve of the fight for independence from Britain (O'Mahoney and Delanty, 2001). Does, in a global context, the local create national myths as a defensive strategy against a global expansive identity? It is not that unequivocal.

In the early 1990s, Guinness developed the global concept of 'The Irish Pub'. Identifying the drinking of Guinness as a well-established element of the experience of visitors to Ireland and of non-Irish people's conception of Irishness, the company saw the potential of an untapped opportunity for future expansion (McGovern, 2002). Guinness needed to become as Irish as possible in order to expand globally and needed an Irish home: Leixlip. Guinness sponsors Leixlip's signboard.

Ironically, Guinness is no longer Irish-owned but part of the global company Diageo, with its headquarters in London – indeed, the capital of the former colonial power.

### **Banal Localism: The Town Crest**

A third level of the explanatory identity comes in the shape of a display of what I call 'banal localism'. On the gigantic signboard the complete town crest is included, symbolizing several references to the history of the town (Nelson, 1990). Previously, I have argued that global connections can create local disintegration, paradoxically through an emphasis on the local language as a form of horizontal

segregation. There is a second form of local but vertical segregation, namely in time. That refers to a separation of people who do *not* share the same history, that 'reflect the different traditions that have made us what we are', as one of the local historians put it (Kelly, 2001: 10).

An act of exclusion based upon horizontal segregation can be redefined in the here and now, people speak or do not speak Irish. Vertical segregation in the time on the other hand is mythical, invisible and therefore in a certain way non-negotiable. Historical segregation is probably the most powerful and persistent of all segregations amongst peoples. Ethnic communities are nothing if not historical communities built up on shared memories (Smith, 1986). If globalization integrates peoples into one world society (Albrow and King, 1990), the idea of a 'shared history' then will have to recede in significance as a source for segregation. How can banal localism contribute to overcoming historical segregation?

Shared history has different dimensions. Leixlip's town crest symbolizes: a) local, b) regional, c) national and d) European and even global history. At the base of the shield, a wavy effect symbolizes Leixlip's location on the Rivers Liffey and Rye. Two leaping salmon, recalling the origins of the town's name, flank the long ship. These symbols refer to a shared *local* history. The crown, symbolizing the kingdom of Meath, refers to a shared *regional* history. The black harp, emblem of Arthur Guinness and Sons, refers to a shared *national* history.

All these local, regional and national symbols are projected on a blue background. 'The basic colours of the shield are azure blue and yellow: these are Scandinavian colours which recall the Viking origins of Leixlip' (Nelson, 1990: 68). Even the centre has global origins. 'This theme is repeated in the centre of the design where a Viking longship is depicted' (Nelson, 1990: 68). Background and centre refer to either a shared *European* history or a shared *global* history. Banal localism might reveal banal globalism.

I – Did you know that Intel would come to Leixlip at the time when the crest was designed?

J – [*defensive*] That had nothing to do with Intel! [*hesitating*] ... it was an imposition really. There was no consultation with the local people. We were not informed. We had heard about Intel. But we did not know anything of this company. Certainly the impression was not given that Intel was a chemical processing plant. (Leixlip resident J., member sub-committee of Town Commission for Design of Town Crest)

The town crest was launched at a reception in Leixlip Castle on 1 December 1989, two months after Intel announced their landmark decision.

### Global Connections: Town Twinning

A fourth dimension on the signboard shows an explicit global element of Leixlip's explanatory identity. Leixlip announces on the board to be 'twinning with Bressuire in France and Niles in the United States of America'.

Bressuire was first. Niles was added later in the nineties. I did not want an American town. I wanted a Northern Ireland or UK town, or possibly a German town. But that

did not happen. They choose an American town. (Leixlip resident K., member Town Council)

The mechanism of geographic *global connectivity* excludes all the other towns that are *not* related to Bressuire *and* to Niles. The mechanism of town twinning is based upon geographic distinction and not upon the social characteristics attributed to a certain people. It refers to *all* people who live in Bressuire and in Niles, interlinking them with *all* people who live in Leixlip – without necessary arguing that these people need to be Irish or have an Irish local, regional or national history. Global connectivity gives Leixlip a unique local identity: there will be no other towns in this world that have the same global connection. Global connectivity does not necessarily lead to local disintegration, but can contribute to local cohesion.

Three conclusions can be made on the basis of this analysis. First, the research does not find an abating local identity as the cultural outcome of strong processes of economic globalization. It confirms the empirical evidence for the case for diversity, or at least resilience in cross-national patterns in the midst of globalization (Guillén, 2001).

Second, there is a mechanism that occurs within the making of a world culture: a global *expansive identity* awaking a local *explanatory identity*. This world cultural form, in itself singular, creates nonetheless, through its local adaptation, diversity.

Third, the observed diversity is not strictly local, but includes several global elements. These global elements, incorporated in local identity and shared history, confirm how in the contemporary world, the local is itself cosmopolitan (Hannerz, 1987). Global connections based upon geography can contribute to local cohesion. Yet specific national elements within the explanatory identity, such as an emphasis on an indigenous language, can cause local disintegration.

## **5. CULTURE IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE AS A GESAMT-CREATION OF STATE, ENTERPRISE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

The significance of interactions between state and non-state actors in the shaping of world culture has been studied on the macro-level (Beckfield, 2003; Boli and Thomas, 1997; Katzenstein et al., 1998; Ó Riain, 2000). A similar increasing significance of interactions might occur on the micro-level, showing an adaptation to world cultural forms, while at the same time locally shaping world culture. 'A member of a Town Council may activate or contribute to world culture just as readily as a spokesperson for Human Rights Watch or an executive for music giant BMI' (Boli, 2005: 386). In the previous section the role of the Town Council has been highlighted as creator of local identity. In this section I articulate that local diversity in Leixlip firstly emerged from other parties within local civil society and secondly is facilitated by global enterprise. I assess trends of local diversification through the reinvention of local history and the revival of the

indigenous language. I discuss the role of the global enterprises in this process, namely as provoker and facilitator.

### **Not an Ordinary Village, but a Village with a Past**

Leixlip's civil society shows a growing interest in Leixlip's local history.<sup>5</sup> The publication of numerous historic studies seems a recent development, starting shortly after Intel's arrival heralded Leixlip's global age (Albrow, 1996).

I know that Leixlip is referred to in a number of works before 1990, but just in passing ... and there are comments by travellers, which are known, but there is not an earlier a history of Leixlip as such ... (Local historian K.)

The grown interest in local history includes the recreation of a forgotten national history, including the discovery of national heroes that have locally sunk into oblivion.

There was a 19th century Fenian leader, the Republican Movement of that time ... William Roantree ... he was born here in the Main Street. Nobody had ever heard about him. Nobody knew where the house was. (Local historian M.)

In Leixlip within the global context, nationalism is actively, deliberately and consciously created.

There was a lot of studying in the National Library involved and in the National Archives ...going to the prison record ... to the cemetery in Glasnevin and finding his tomb ...his grave ... and just generally rediscovering him. (Local historian M.)

In 1996, the Cathaoirleach (mayor) of the Leixlip Town Commission, unveiled a plaque for William Roantree, funded by the Bord Fáilte, the national Irish Tourist Board. Negra examines the marketing of Irish identity in American television commercials and argues that Bord Fáilte promotes a romantic image of Ireland to camouflage industrial practices, inviting American tourists to partake in the 'pleasures of re-colonizing Ireland' (Negra, 2001: 94). Who is addressed with this plaque?

I hope they will keep the plaque, just to tell to younger generations ... and new people ... to share our knowledge ... (Local historian M.)

Aiming at younger generations and new people, the plaque seems a nationalistic rather than a patriotic act, a primordial, irrational force (Connor, 1993). Yet why does this nationalistic act emerge now in prosperous, peaceful Leixlip, almost 80 years after the establishment of the nation-state?

[continues] ... to make clear that this is not just an ordinary village, but a village with a past ... (Local historian M.)

The discovery is an act to highlight distinction, to establish the particular, the unique. But to whom might Leixlip seem an ordinary village? Is there

any relationship between the coming of Hewlett-Packard and Intel and the emergence of numerous local history studies?

I suppose that there is a feeling – certainly amongst my age group – that if it is not collected ... and noted ... and here and now ...with the sheer level of pace and development ... that we will lose it all. (Local historian J.)

On the national level Ireland's past is reinvented (O'Connor and Cronin, 1993), in the competition over a global tourism industry (Urry, 2000, 2002). Yet on the local level, nationalism is reinvented as a defence against a global expansive identity. Anticipating the thesis of a homogeneous world culture, with 'the sheer level of pace and development', local civil society creates its own antithesis. Out of fear for sameness, diversity is created.

### Voice of the Irish People: Speaking Irish in Leixlip

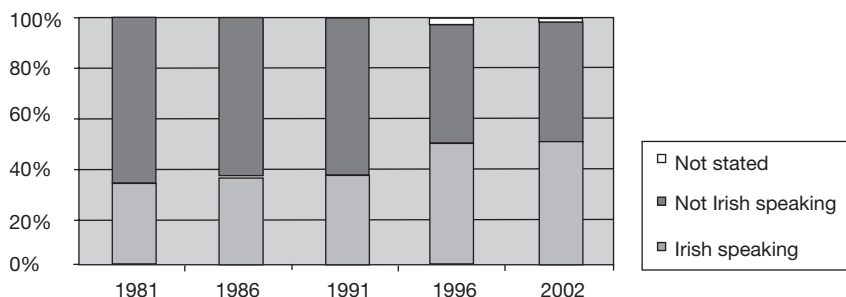
One might argue that the above-mentioned impressions are anecdotal, based upon the simple analysis of a sign and the observation of a growing interest in local history. Identity is hard to quantify and to empirically measure. Which developments occur in the field of language? The percentage of Irish speakers has grown significantly in Leixlip's global age: from 33 percent in 1981 to 50 percent in 2002 (Figure 1).

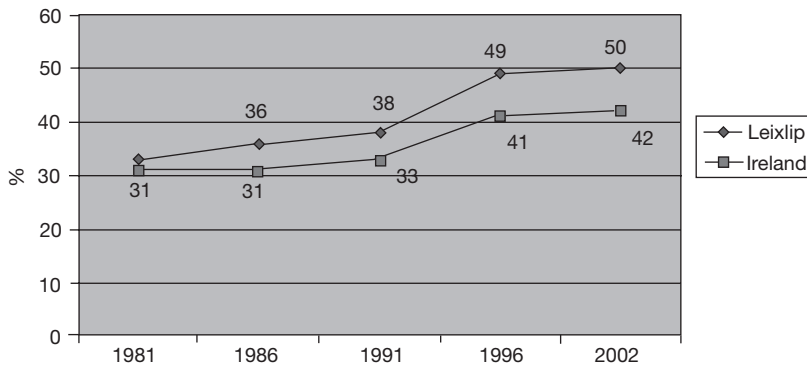
Globalization seems to favour the development of the indigenous language. Indeed, the growth of Irish speakers between 1981 and 2002 in Leixlip is significant stronger than the national average (17% for Leixlip versus 11% for Ireland) (Figure 2).

Based upon these figures, it cannot be argued that the increase is caused by globalization. There might be other disturbing variables. Yet there is no empirical support for the homogeneity thesis either. Local observations confirm the statistical trend.

I feel we appreciate Irish more and more ... One of our primary schools teaches entirely through the medium of Irish. The school has influence in the town ... when it holds

**Figure 1** Irish speakers in Leixlip as percentage of total population > three years



**Figure 2** Irish speakers in Leixlip and Ireland as percentage of total population > three years

activities they are well supported, hundreds of events ... The Irish schools are growing bigger, there are more children attending. (Leixlip resident U., mother of three children)

Census data on Irish-speaking are only available since 1981. Was Leixlip an Irish-speaking town, making what seems an increase a de facto decrease of Irish speakers?

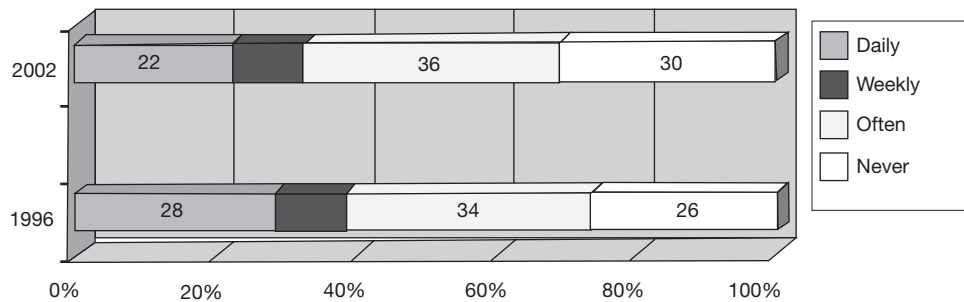
Leixlip back then [in the 1950s] was a small hamlet ... We were all English speaking ... there were very few people who spoke Irish ... you see North Kildare was over the centuries regarded as part of The Pale. Leixlip was deemed inside the Pale. There were a lot of estate houses here, they gave a lot of local employment ... servants ... agricultural ... to cut their turf ... harvest their crops ... it was really a small rural society ... (Leixlip resident A.)

As a part of the Pale, the British-ruled area around Dublin, Leixlip was never Irish speaking, presumably not even in a far past. In the early 10th century, Norse invaders defeated the Leinstermen. Leixlip was established as the 'most westerly point of the Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin' (Nelson, 1990: 1). It is assumed that the language that was spoken in the Scandinavian Kingdom was Scandinavian. This is reflected in Leixlip's name that is from Viking origin (Nelson, 1990). We can speculate that the proportion of Irish speakers in Leixlip is now, at the height of its global age, historically at a peak.

To what extent does the increase of Irish speakers reflect bilingualism? Bilingualism in the context of globalization is said to consist of a lingua franca, for example, English, and a native home-spoken language (Mazlish, 1993). Yet in Leixlip, English is not the lingua franca and Irish is not the language spoken at home. In fact, Irish is very rarely spoken (Figure 3).

Only a fifth of Leixlip's inhabitants speak Irish on a daily basis. This percentage has dropped by six percent between 1996 and 2002, possibly related to the change in age-structure of Leixlip's population. The percentage of people under 19 dropped by nine percent, from 41 to 32 percent in the same period (CSO, 1981–2002). The daily speakers of Irish in Leixlip seem to be mostly school-going children, who



**Figure 3** Frequency of speaking Irish in Leixlip

do not continue to use the language on a daily basis after they have left school. We might argue that speaking Irish seems to have a *symbolic* rather than a *communicative* purpose.

A group of parents founded the Irish primary school *Gloir Na Gaeli*, Voice of the Irish People, in Leixlip. The national government funds the school, with five percent of the budget coming from the parents. Most parents are not native Irish speakers themselves. The basic curricular goal of Irish primary education was originally the transformation of school children into 'citizens with a specifically Irish identity' (Boucher, 2001; Drudy and Lynch, 1993). But why now, in a global age? One of the parents, member of a Resident Association, tells:

Sometimes they are just going too far. One of the estates was built for the Intel and HP-people, approximately 1000 houses. They wanted to call it 'Cyberplain', much to our annoyance. So then we made them change it. It is now called 'Rinawade'. It was recently sold under that name. (Leixlip resident F., member Residents Association)

Beside Leixlip residents, there are Intel and HP people, executing power in the economic domain. Yet they go too far when claiming dominance in the *symbolic* domain. As a defence against this expansive identity, the local reclaims authority in the symbolic domain: local and national symbols, and a symbolic language.

### Global Dominant Actors: Provoker and Facilitator

In contemporary world culture, the dominant global actors are states, transnational organizations and intergovernmental organizations (Boli and Thomas, 1997). I identified economic globalization in Leixlip as a form of dominant globalization. It is plausible to argue that dominant actors directly shape world culture (Meyer et al., 1997). Yet I argue that, in a seemingly reverse effect, dominant expansive global actors can be both provokers and facilitators of a heterogeneous world culture. What do we find on the micro-level?

Intel holds a policy of active local involvement, not of splendid isolation. As part of that policy Intel supports many local projects: recent local history studies and the annual Leixlip Festival that 'pays tribute to our Viking and Gaelic past' (Kelly, 2001). A banner crosses Leixlip Main Street: '*Intel is delighted to*

*support the Leixlip Festival*'. The walking tour of Leixlip (Kelly, 2001) features a description of the town crest, a picture of the bilingual street names, a visit to William Roantree's House and a page-large advertisement of Intel Ireland:

Intel Ireland are delighted to support the *Walking Tour of Leixlip Village*. We aim to earn the support of our local communities through being responsible, concerned and involved. (Intel Ireland, in Kelly, 2001: 50)

The global player, Intel Corporation, facilitates the development of the local identity and of the Irish language, where the national government is less cooperative, as the principal teacher of the Irish school tells:

We don't distribute materials in English only. They have to be either bilingual or monolingual in Irish. Some posters are in English ... so we will send them back [laughs]. I won't distribute them ... A lot comes from the government. Look, this is from Irish Post, about Irish Stamps ... All the material is in English! And look, this is a poster for Irish Roads Safety Awareness ... in English! It's not produced in Irish. They come daily from the national government. I have a standard letter for it. (Leixlip resident P., teacher Irish School)

With apparently no national policy on bilingual promotion material, the global corporation's policy is unequivocal in supporting the Irish language.

In the past Intel has sent us stuff in English. But now they know, that I won't ...ehm ... distribute that. So they prepare them especially. Often they fax me something to check or to approve it first. They will issue certificates in Irish ... All the competitions and the literature they produce is in Irish. They never send me anything in English. (Leixlip resident P., teacher Irish School)

Yet why would the global market player invest in Irish translations of brochures on the local level?

Because we have asked them ... Because we are big. They are not going to leave us out, to exclude us from any of their education activities, just for the sake of not putting themselves into the trouble of not making out things in Irish. (Leixlip resident P., teacher Irish School)

'We are big', the principal teacher explains, implying that they can execute power over the global company through the use of a symbolic possession, almost as a weapon. Yet there might be another explanation. As part of their policy of local involvement, Intel Ireland has established a *Community Advisory Panel* (CAP), consisting of representative members of the local community advising Intel.<sup>6</sup> A former Intel vice-president tells:

F – ... And we get their advice ... so that is extremely important... for if we did not have the community with us.... they can stop you...[pensive] They can stop you ...

I – How can they stop you?

F – They can stop you because ...by objecting, you to move on to the next development

...

I – Really? They still have the power ...

F – Oh yes! Absolutely! Under the Irish constitution, all you need is one.

I – One ... person ...

F – That's correct! One person. And they can pull it off for three until six months ... construction ... that would hold up the whole thing ... [*disturbed*] you might never be able to do it again...! [*recalling*] Or you go somewhere else in the world ... (Former Vice-President Intel Ireland)

The local community recreates its own identity driven by a fear of 'los[ing] it all': the revived language, the reinvented local history and possibly ultimately local autonomy. The global company, fuelled by a comparable fear of 'los[ing] it all', the progress, the expansion, the construction, the success, ultimately the local power, is more than willing to support the creation of local diversity. The result is a multi-layered, heterogeneous culture, uniquely created within the global context as a *gesamt*-creation of state, enterprise and civil society.

## 6. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

I extend world society scholarship by analysing the intertwining of processes of economic and cultural globalization from a micro-perspective. World polity theory draws attention to the organization of culture on a worldwide basis and has found evidence that the state will find itself modifying its traditions in the direction of world-cultural forms. A growing number of studies have contributed to our understanding of the interaction between state and non-state actors. Yet while culture has become more global, few scholars agree that a homogenous global culture is emerging. The concept of one heterogeneous world culture raises two conceptual issues.

The first issue is whether a culture can be singular or presupposes different modes and repertoires in a universe of modes and repertoires. This research argues that alongside a rise of humanity as a collective actor, a collective mode of life develops as an adaptation to world cultural forms, as world polity theory suggests. The second issue relates to the question of whether a culture as a collective mode of life, needs to be necessarily homogeneous. As Hannerz argues: 'A culture need not be homogeneous, or even particularly coherent. Instead of assuming far-reaching cultural sharing, a "replication of uniformity", we should take a distributive view of cultures as systems of meaning' (Hannerz, 1987: 552).

This research has aimed to contribute to the understanding of the operating of singular world cultural forms creating a heterogeneous cultural reality, by empirically studying the micro-level. In order to understand the global village, I studied one little global village. I selected the nation-state with one of the most globalized economies in the world, the Republic of Ireland, and within Ireland the town with the highest per capita proportion of foreign direct investment. The selected village was Leixlip, Co. Kildare, home to Intel's largest manufacturing plant outside of the USA and to a large inkjet factory of Hewlett-Packard.

Leixlip's global age began around 1990, when Intel built their factory on Leixlip's ground. I identified the cultural effects of economic globalization on this local community. Based upon the empirical research, I developed three theoretical concepts as a contribution to an understanding of world cultural forms operating on the micro- but possibly on the macro-level as well.

First, the research suggested a concept of *dominant globalization*. Globalization as a process of spatial transformation is nowhere in the world identical. Within the context of both Ireland and Leixlip, economic globalization is articulated by its suddenness and explosive character. Cultural globalization transforms what was a relative homogeneous society. The arrival of economic globalization to Ireland, on the national level, has been the combination of strong efforts of state, enterprise and society. Yet local government and society seem to have had very little involvement in Intel's decision to move to Leixlip. I identified economic globalization in Leixlip as a form of *dominant globalization*, with little local autonomy.

Second, within Leixlip's context a global, *expansive identity* occurred. Boli (2005) has identified four contemporary world cultural trends: extra-ordinary expansion, organization, ubiquity and rationalizing, seemingly homogenizing the local life experience. Besides dominance, these characteristics seemed to be applicable to globalization in Leixlip, as represented by Intel and Hewlett-Packard. I call this a global, expansive identity. I suggest making a distinction between world culture and global culture and identifying these trends as a part of a global culture. Global culture and its characteristics are only one part of the shaping of world culture. On the micro-level: the expansive identity of the American multinationals is only one side of the global village.

Third, the research observed in Leixlip what I call a local, *explanatory identity*. This identity is less self-evident, but in construction and at pains to explain itself. It instructs both its own residents and outsiders what Leixlip represents, on at least four levels: which language they speak, to which nation-state they belong, what their shared history is and with whom they share their present. This explanatory identity, construct of Leixlip's global age, is not strictly local, but cosmopolitan in itself. It incorporates global connections, references and imaginations in local identity. Some are based upon geography and can contribute to local cohesion. At the same time, the explanatory identity, consist explicitly of a revival of nationalism, such as an emphasis on an indigenous language, that can cause local disintegration within a contemporary global context.

The research found empirical evidence that the dynamic between the expansive and the explanatory identity creates a heterogeneous culture on the local level. Leixlip's global age heralds a) a reorientation on the local identity, b) a reinvention of local and national history and c) a revival of the national language. In the picturesque global village of Leixlip, processes of globalization create their own antithesis, to such an extent that the counter-reaction becomes part of the process itself.

What is the driving principle within the dynamic between expansive and explanatory identity on a local level? Does local society reinvent Irish nationalism as a buffer against what is felt as a global penetration of the local community, a defence with symbolic weapons, creating a bipolar cultural identity? The reality is more complex.

The local identity and locally revived nationalism are partly constructed by the global players in a global expansive strategy. Guinness needed to become as Irish as possible, to globally expand and singling out Leixlip as 'Home of Guinness' was part of that strategy. For the American companies the process is characterized by mutual dependency. While the local community recreates its own identity driven by a fear of 'los[ing] it all' (the revived language, the reinvented local history, maybe simply local autonomy), the global company, fuelled by a comparable fear of 'los[ing] it all' (the progress, the global expansion, ultimately the local power) is more than willing to fund the creation of the new local identity. In Leixlip, the global enterprise is both provoker and facilitator of local diversity. Rather than bipolar, the emerging culture is a multi-layered, triangular *gesamt*-creation of local society, global multinationals and the national government.

The manifestations of world culture are heterogeneous, yet its organizing principle is singular. These principles, operating on the micro-level, are generated by the dynamic between a global, expansive identity and a local, explanatory identity bringing forth local diversity. This local diversity, is a diversity of a form specific for a heterogeneous world culture. On the micro-level, in the global village of Leixlip, the national language is reinvented, yet for symbolic purposes and not for communicative purposes. While a global culture refers to increasing sharing, its antithesis, local diversification often through revived nationalism, can be increasingly understood *symbolically*.

The locally created heterogeneous culture is quickly distributed worldwide. Local historians sell their history books via the Internet to people throughout the world. Some local forms become world cultural forms. Intel implements the concept of a *Community Advisory Panel*, developed in Leixlip in 1992, in nine Intel's worldwide, besides Ireland, in Arizona, Oregon, Colorado, Israel, Malaysia, Massachusetts, New Mexico and the Philippines. Not only so, Intel has now copied the local motto of the town crest as their global slogan. 'Intel, Leap Ahead' is a literal copy of the motto of Leixlip's town crest: *Léim ar Aghaid*. Defined by the Town Council in December 1989 as the local response to Intel's global challenge, the very same motto has become the global verbal weapon in the quest for worldwide dominion.

Meanwhile, in Leixlip, this small picturesque global village with, besides two global manufacturing facilities, a bridge, a toll house, a castle and the Wonderful Barn built by Lady Louisa Conolly, a heterogeneous world culture is created.

A reality, of a certain kind.

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## NOTES

- 1 Ireland ranked 1 on the cluster of Economic Integration in 2002, 2003 and 2004.
- 2 From 2424 in 1971 to 11,938 in 1986; in 2002 15,016 (CSO, 1981–2002).
- 3 [<http://www.intel.com/ireland/about/thesite/index.html>], 22 October 2005.
- 4 Information provided by Head Government and Public Affairs Officer Hewlett-Packard Ireland, 22 March 2004.
- 5 In 1990 the Irish Countrywomen's Association published *Leixlip: A Local History*, and Gerard Nelson published *A History of Leixlip, Co. Kildare*. In 2001 local historian Seamus Kelly produced *A Walking Tour of Leixlip*, supported by Intel Ireland. In 2005 John Colgan, who lives in the former Toll House opposite the Salmon Leap Inn, published an ambitious study on local history, sponsored by Intel. The town website has a large section on local history [<http://kildare.ie/leixlip>], written by local historian John Wigle.
- 6 Intel Public Affairs *CAP Handbook* (2004), compiled from worldwide input by the CRC CAP Subteam, internal report, February.

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